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SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS:
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its sixteenth session

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I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

1. At its sixteenth session, the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) reviewed the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 and the preparations for INSTRAW's participation at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II.

2. The attention of the Economic and Social Council is drawn to the Board's conclusions (part VII).

II. STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

3. At its 1st meeting, the Board discussed the minutes of the informal session of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting, held in Beijing on 16 September 1995, and of the third session, held at INSTRAW headquarters on 17 February 1996, under item 4 of the provisional agenda, Professor Els Postel-Coster, Chairperson of the Committee, introduced the item. In considering it, the Board had before it document INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.4.

4. The Chairperson of the Strategic Planning Committee gave an overview of the main topics discussed, based on the conceptual framework prepared for the meeting.

5. The first topic considered was INSTRAW's research activities and clearing-house functions. Although both were important, it was pointed out that, owing to the Institute's limited staff and budget, the Institute should focus more on up-front research by establishing a network of qualified consultants and experts from academic institutions. Collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies would facilitate the process. That interaction would help to improve INSTRAW's visibility and contribution in its areas of expertise.

6. At its third session, the Strategic Planning Committee reviewed INSTRAW's work performance, administrative and financial situation and logistic requirements. It was agreed that special considerations for fund-raising mechanisms should be discussed by the Board. One innovative way could be the commercialization of advisory services - for example, a roster of research and training institutions and qualified individual experts who carried out activities on gender issues could be compiled, broken down by theme and region.

7. The Committee also discussed matters pertaining to internships and training programmes for INSTRAW staff members and programmes that the Institute could provide to external candidates, in accordance with its statute.

8. The Chairperson expressed the satisfaction of the Strategic Planning Committee with the work of the Acting Director and recommended her appointment as Director.

9. The representative of the regional commissions noted that, at its inception, the Strategic Planning Committee was composed of five members, the

fifth being a representative of the regional commissions in an ex officio capacity. She requested clarification on the current composition of the Committee, owing to the fact that the regional commissions had not been notified of any Committee meetings since 1994.

10. Both the Chairperson of the Committee and the Acting Director concurred with the representative of the regional commissions, and a chronological statement of facts was presented by the Acting Director.

11. The Board then proposed and elected the following new members of the Strategic Planning Committee, by acclamation:

President: Gail Saunders

Vice-President: Selma Acuner

Members: Esther Ashton

Noelie Kangoye

A representative of the regional commissions

12. Regarding the representation of the regional commissions, it was noted that the matter would be discussed with the current coordinator of the regional commissions, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

13. The ex officio member representing the host country requested that she be allowed to comment on the Strategic Planning Committee before the conclusion of the sixteenth session.

III. PROGRESS REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR

14. At the 2nd meeting, under agenda item 5, the Acting Director of INSTRAW introduced her progress report on the implementation of the programme of INSTRAW activities concluding the biennium 1994-1995 and the matters related to the operations and functioning of the Institute (INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.2). The Board also had before it documents INSTRAW/BT/1996/INF/2-5.

15. The Acting Director outlined the activities undertaken by the Institute following the fifteenth session of the Board of Trustees (24-28 April 1995). She referred to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/45 of 27 July 1995, in which the Council took note of the report of the Board of Trustees on its fifteenth session. 1/

16. She referred to the Institute's participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum, held in Beijing, 4-15 September 1995, and introduced document INSTRAW/BT/1996/INF/2. She also referred to INSTRAW activities organized to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and introduced document INSTRAW/BT/1996/INF/3.

17. She made an analysis of the scope and meaning of the 1995 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, held on 2 and 3 November 1995, and pointed out certain elements for the Board to consider when discussing the fund-raising strategy in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3 and Corr.1).

18. She also highlighted General Assembly resolution 50/163 of 22 December 1995, dealing with the substantive work of the Institute as described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/538), from which several comments were extracted for the consideration of the Board of Trustees. Resolution 50/162 of 22 December 1995, on the proposed merger of INSTRAW and UNIFEM, was also made available and commented on.

19. The Acting Director brought to the attention of the Board the Secretary-General's designation of Rosario Green as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues.

20. The representative of the regional commissions expressed the gratitude of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) for the substantive and financial contributions INSTRAW made to its statistics programme. She cited, in particular, the publication prepared jointly by INSTRAW, ECE, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and Statistics Sweden, entitled Women and Men in Europe and North America, and the study published jointly by INSTRAW and ECE, Time Use of Women in Europe and North America. She specified that the INSTRAW contributions should be reflected in the report.

21. In reply to the Board's request, the Acting Director presented a more comprehensive overview of the Institute's participation in the Conference on Women and the Forum. At the Conference, the Institute had held two special events, jointly organized with the Department for Development Support and Management Services of the Secretariat and with the financial contribution of the Swedish Environment Institute (SEI) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA): one on women and natural resources management, and one on economic and political empowerment of women and the need for gender statistics.

22. Four panels were organized at the Forum on the following issues:

(a) Time-use statistics on recognition of women's and men's contributions, in cooperation with the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat;

(b) Women, water and environmental sanitation, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA);

(c) Economic and political empowerment of women, in collaboration with SEI and the SIDA;

(d) Media and communications for the advancement of women: models for a global reach, in collaboration with the Italian Association for Women in Development.

23. The incumbent President of the Board during the period under review, who had presided at both of the INSTRAW special events, stated that the Institute's impact at the Conference had been stronger than she had expected. The Institute had received commendations for the quality and the content of its presentations and press conferences, which were attended by a large public.

24. The Board congratulated INSTRAW for its successful participation in the Conference and inquired about the specific follow-up activities the Institute intended to undertake. The Acting Director informed the Board that INSTRAW was preparing a publication on the proceedings and recommendations emanating from those activities. The Institute would also analyse the petitions it had received in light of its programme of activities and in consultation with the regional commissions, according to regional priorities spelled out in the Platform for Action adopted at Beijing. 2/

25. In regard to the implementation of the Platform for Action set out in General Assembly resolution 50/203, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Secretariat, briefed the Board on the actions taken by the Secretariat. She said that the Division would carefully monitor governmental activities to ensure full implementation of the Platform.

26. She also informed the Board that the Division for the Advancement of Women would coordinate the system-wide implementation of the Platform for Action, including the intergovernmental and inter-agency aspects.

27. In regard to the functions of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues, the Acting Director informed the Board that the Special Adviser had convened a plenary meeting in the second week of February 1996 with the heads of all the departments and focal points on women's issues of the United Nations system, with the objective of establishing possible means of responding, in a coordinated manner, to the Platform for Action. Three major groups of activities had been identified - namely, policy and research, operational activities, and improvement of the status of women in the United Nations.

28. The Board stressed the need to intensify its efforts to include a gender perspective and gender issues and analyses in the work of INSTRAW and in other United Nations agencies, since those concepts were not commonly known in many countries.

29. The Board reiterated that in order to promote gender concerns, it was important to consider methodology, which should focus not only on women but also on the relation of women and men. She suggested that the Institute incorporate that concern in its reports and in the focus of its activities.

30. The Acting Director commented that translating complex concepts which were condensed in one word, as in the case of "gender" or "empowerment", required adequate understanding of the cultural, economic, religious, social and political circumstances of different countries.

31. The Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women stated that "gender" was an accepted term in the United Nations and that the concept and the

recommendations of the Conference on Women would remain on paper unless INSTRAW, UNIFEM, the Division and their corresponding policy-making organs brought them to life.

32. The representative of the regional commissions stressed the need to analyse the comparative advantages of the different agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and the need to identify the competitive advantage of INSTRAW. She also stressed the need to establish policy coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the Platform for Action and the regional plans of action. She stated that the current session could provide an opportunity to initiate such coordination.

33. She also suggested that, under their mandates, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the regional commissions dealt with Governments and that the Institute's catalytic role was crucial in coordinating the work of academic institutions, research centres and non-governmental organizations, particularly those working on gender issues.

34. The Acting Director referred to the Institute's relationship with the regional commissions, stating the importance of continuing and strengthening the cooperation to ensure that regional specificities were taken into account in the Institute's programme of work. She said that, while the Institute's proposed programme budget allowed for limited collaboration with the regional commissions, the question should be reflected upon in the forthcoming deliberations.

35. The Board requested the Acting Director to explain how the Institute envisaged carrying out its planned activities, particularly with regard to administrative matters. She specifically referred to some of the pending issues relating to the post of Chief Administrative Officer and other vacant posts. The representative of the Under-Secretary General for the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development noted the concern of the Board members about the post of the Chief Administrative Officer and wished to assure the Board that steps were being taken by the administration to rectify the situation without delay.

36. The Acting Director explained that the issues were directly related to the scope of her mandate and the level of responsibility she had assumed at INSTRAW. She had full responsibility, but not full authority. She explained that, while the Director of the Institute had the delegation of authority of the Secretary-General, her contractual situation with INSTRAW was unique and did not give her the authority to take certain actions. Another consequence of the situation was the difficulty of recruiting qualified personnel to fill the vacant posts at the Institute.

37. The Board also sought information on the INSTRAW bibliographic database, mailing list and roster of experts. The Acting Director informed the Board that, in their current form, those systems could only be used to a limited extent as a guide for establishing contacts with relevant research centres and institutions. The limitations of the databases had also hindered the Institute from identifying competent consultants.

38. The Board noted the active participation of INSTRAW in the host country. She welcomed the initiative and inquired about how to enlarge the scope of influence for the benefit of other developing countries. The Acting Director made clear that those activities were undertaken on an experimental basis and had no financial implications for the Institute. The reactions received from local participants were quite encouraging, and INSTRAW was currently preparing a consolidated report to be submitted to the Board at its next session, in the hope of undertaking similar activities in other countries in collaboration with the regional commissions and with the support of relevant institutions.

39. The Acting Director emphasized the importance of inter-agency collaboration. She referred to the Secretary-General's initiative in establishing a United Nations staff college at the International Training Centre (ITC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at Turin. The representative of the Centre explained the primary goal and objectives of the five-year project: to help the organization better meet the current and diverse demands placed on it in matters relating to peace and security and humanitarian and human rights affairs; to help the United Nations system to meet the new and dramatic challenges of the future; to strengthen cooperation and coordination among the system partners; and to help the United Nations organization to meet the calls for reform, accountability and flexibility. In terms of the audience, two closely related but distinct groups had been identified - namely, the staff of the United Nations system at all levels, and selected national partners involved in United Nations system activities.

40. Based on a research and needs analysis, the curricula being developed addressed peace-keeping, peacemaking, and peace-building; conflict resolution and crisis management; development management and development studies; governance, democracy and human rights; new training methodologies and technologies; and the management and development of human resources.

41. The representative of the ILO/ITC stressed the importance of continuing collaboration with INSTRAW to ensure that the gender dimension was fully integrated into the preparation of the curricula. The project intended to use innovative training methodologies to improve its outreach, and she therefore raised the possibility of installing a video conferencing system between INSTRAW and the Centre.

IV. NETWORKING OF FOCAL POINTS

42. At its 3rd meeting, on 20 February 1996, the Board considered agenda item 6, on the networking of focal points.

43. In discussing the agenda item, the Board had before it the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997 (INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3 and Corr.1), two conference room papers (INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.1 and Add.1, INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.6) and document INSTRAW/BT/1996/INF.6. The Coordinator for the research and training programme of INSTRAW gave a brief overview of the elements that should be taken into account when networking and INSTRAW's working relations with the focal points were discussed.

44. She identified some of the factors that affected the level and quality of working relations between INSTRAW and its focal points. She referred to the facts, among others, that the focal points covered a variety of interests and working objectives, that they had different degrees of access to the new information and communication technologies, and that some had fewer financial resources than others.

45. She recalled that, in an effort to strengthen the network of focal points, some proposals had been presented to the Board at its thirteenth and fifteenth sessions, but owing to the financial situation of the Institute, significant allocation of funds could not be provided for those endeavours. Moreover, some suggestions had been included in the proposed programme budget of INSTRAW for 1996-1997 for strengthening INSTRAW cooperation with the focal points. She stated that, in order to make full use of the network, INSTRAW, together with the Board, must analyse the whole structure and the proposed strategies prepared by INSTRAW.

46. During the discussion that followed, the Board stressed the importance of providing clear guidance on the role of the focal points. The Acting Director mentioned that that was, indeed, one of the issues that had been discussed by the Strategic Planning Committee at the Women's Conference. The incumbent President of the Board at that time, who had attended the meeting with focal points at the Conference, informed the Board of the limitations expressed by the focal points in improving their relationship with INSTRAW. Among others, they strongly emphasized the need to have INSTRAW documents translated into other languages in order to make them useful for international networking.

47. Several recommendations were forwarded by the Board and by the representative of the regional commissions on enhancing INSTRAW's working relations with the focal points. The Board stressed the importance of preparing a brochure defining the functions of a focal point and the mutual collaboration involved. It was also recommended that INSTRAW should encourage the focal points to attend the activities of INSTRAW held in their respective regions, which could provide them with an opportunity to develop some common activities. The representative of the ILO/ITC endorsed that view, saying that INSTRAW could consider inviting focal points to the regional seminars where INSTRAW training packages were tested as a way of familiarizing them with INSTRAW materials, which they could, in turn, help to disseminate.

48. In relation to the proposal to provide seed money to selected focal points, the Acting Director made it clear that the selection would be based on proposals submitted by the focal points. INSTRAW would establish guidelines for submission of the proposals based on the guidelines of INSTRAW's research and training framework and would take due consideration of regional priorities spelled out by the regional commissions. She requested the Board to consider allocating additional funds to the seed money project in order to broaden the number of focal points that could benefit from the project, to which the Board agreed.

49. Regarding a suggestion to create an INSTRAW newsletter for focal points or a permanent section in INSTRAW News, the staff member of the Institute responsible for the theme noted that the latter had been tried in the past but

that there had been difficulties in securing contributions from the focal points for that section in the newsletter.

50. Referring to the request address to INSTRAW by the Institute of Arab-American Women (IAAW), suggesting possible collaboration with INSTRAW, the Board was informed of the previous contacts that the Institute had made with INSTRAW. More specifically, the Acting Director of INSTRAW had been invited as guest speaker to the IAAW conference held in New York in January 1996, on the theme After Beijing. The Acting Director said that INSTRAW would study the possibility of collaborating with IAAW.

51. In introducing a document containing the nomination from the Government of Austria of the Ministry of Women's Affairs of Austria as a focal point, the Acting Director informed the Board that although Austria was not a regular donor to INSTRAW, the Government had contributed in 1995 and had pledged a contribution for 1996. The Board approved by acclamation the nomination and welcomed the Ministry as a new INSTRAW focal point.

52. Regarding the request from a Russian non-governmental organization interested in becoming a focal point, the Board recommended that the Institute follow up on the request and submit the relevant documents to the Board at its next session.

53. On another matter, the representative of the ILO/ITC commended INSTRAW's training package on gender statistics, which were being finalized, and suggested that INSTRAW discuss with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) the possibility of joint use of the material for the training package on population that the Centre was preparing for UNFPA. The Board welcomed that initiative.

V. EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

54. At its 3rd meeting, on 20 and 21 February 1996, under agenda item 7, the Board discussed the substantive elements of the proposed programme elements and the corresponding budgetary allocations for the subprogramme on economic and political empowerment of women, under agenda item 8. The Board had before it the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3 and Corr.1 and 2) and documents INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.2, CRP.3 and CRP.6.

55. In introducing the question the Coordinator for the research and training programme of INSTRAW first referred to document INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.2, on economic integration and women's development prospects in Latin America and the Caribbean, which provided a more elaborate description of a proposal to conduct a research study on the topic, as reflected in the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997. The Coordinator stated that the major objectives of the proposed research study were to evaluate the scope of gender differentiation under the system of export-processing zones; to evaluate the impact of the zones on women's development prospects; and finally to understand the overall impact of the structural changes arising from free trade agreements on women's economic and political empowerment processes. The project was originally elaborated to include Asia and the Pacific, but, owing to financial limitations, only the

Latin America and Caribbean region has been considered, as a first stage, in the proposed budget.

56. Also proposed under the subprogramme on the empowerment of women was the organization of an international campaign to improve women's access to credit, described in document INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.3. The Coordinator explained the rationale behind the proposal and its relevance to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996) and the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, held in 1995. She said that since the proposal entailed a new way of promoting women's economic empowerment and since the organization and realization of the campaign required close collaboration with other United Nations agencies and of obtaining funds from outside the INSTRAW core budget, the Board should consider both the organizational and the financial possibilities of such a campaign. The Board members expressed concern about the complexities of the field of study, which required specific expertise in the field.

57. During the discussion, the Board noted the importance of the proposed research on the impact of economic integration on women's development prospects and the relevant human rights issues, particularly in certain developing regions facing economic structural change, such as Latin America and the Caribbean.

58. However, the Board members also expressed some concerns about conceptualization of the proposals, in particular those of human rights that had not been previously incorporated into the Institute's general activities, particularly in view of the fact that a number of agencies had already done or were currently doing work on the subject. Given the complexity of the issue, the Board members thought that INSTRAW should reformulate some of the proposals to be discussed at the next session of the Board. Some Board members also pointed out that huge compilations of data and information on the issue already existed in most countries, particularly in Asia. The importance of collecting and integrating those materials in the design of a research methodology for the programme element was stressed. Furthermore, concerns were expressed about the geographical coverage of the study, specifically the selection and number of countries involved in the research. A Board member suggested that INSTRAW might wish to focus more on African countries for that particular research activity and benefit from the local expertise available in the region.

VI. PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

59. At the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th meetings, on 20 and 21 February 1996, under agenda item 7, the Acting Director presented the proposed programme budget for INSTRAW for the biennium 1996-1997 for the consideration of the Board. The Board had before it the following documents:

(a) INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3 and Corr.1 and 2;

(b) INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.1;

(c) INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.5;

(d) INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.6;

(e) INSTRAW/BT/1996/INF/6.

60. The Acting Director stated that it was relevant to note that the Institute had not escaped the financial difficulties that were affecting the United Nations system at large. Those difficulties had compelled INSTRAW to adhere to serious restrictions while elaborating its programme budget for the biennium. On the basis of current income, the budget that was being proposed envisaged the utilization of the current balance in the Trust Fund plus the income from 1996, thus leaving the income for 1997 as a reserve for the next biennium.

61. To facilitate the analysis of the item, the Acting Director proposed that comments on document INSTRAW/BT/1996/CRP.5, "Inter-agency cooperation between INSTRAW and bodies and agencies of the United Nations system", be expressed.

62. The representative of the International Training Centre (ITC) of the ILO referred to the cooperation between INSTRAW and the Centre, which has produced, inter alia, important training packages: Women, Water Supply and Sanitation (1987, updated in 1991); Women and New and Renewable Sources of Energy (1990); and, Women, Environmental Management and Sustainable Development (1995). She stated that the training packages were listed in the Centre's publication catalogue and suggested that INSTRAW should include the titles in its research publications and training materials on the internet. To expand the promotion of the material, she suggested a two-pronged approach: selling the packages to relevant environmental institutions, and utilizing the packages in regional and national training seminars.

63. She referred to the preliminary steps jointly undertaken by INSTRAW and the ILO/ITC to organize a subregional training seminar on women, environmental management and sustainable development, initially scheduled for the autumn of 1996, for those countries with economies in transition.

64. She mentioned that the Centre, in cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights, was in the process of revising a manual entitled Human Rights Reporting, prepared in 1990. As requested in para. 334 of the Platform For Action, 3/ she invited INSTRAW to contribute suggestions for incorporating the gender dimension in the revised manual. She also requested that the Division for the Advancement of Women be invited to contribute.

65. The Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women explained that the Division was the functional organ of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. The Director also welcomed INSTRAW's findings on women and the media, which she hoped would be made available to the Commission at its fortieth session where the topic would be a main item. She spoke about the Division's existing page on the web site created for the Fourth World Conference on Women and proposed that it be expanded and financed, in collaboration with INSTRAW and UNIFEM. The Acting Director stated that in order to attend to the expenses of that inter-agency activity, the Institute would certainly consider raising extrabudgetary funds.

66. In reference to the comparative advantage of each agency, the representative of the regional commissions stated that it was necessary to streamline priorities, owing to the financial crisis faced by the United Nations system. She mentioned that each region had its own consultation mechanism in the form of regional conferences and that the ECLAC region was preparing the next one for 1997. Such an intergovernmental forum constituted an appropriate occasion for INSTRAW to improve its visibility and relations with member States. She stressed that INSTRAW could use the regional commissions to monitor regional activities closely. She mentioned the possibility of developing joint programmes and projects between INSTRAW and the regional commissions, as had been done in the case of ECE's project on entrepreneurship and credit for countries with economies in transition, which could undoubtedly draw on the Institute's programme on credit.

67. The Ambassador of Ecuador to the Dominican Republic, attending in an observer capacity as representative of a member State, expressed his appreciation and paid his respects to the former and the incumbent Presidents of the Board. He wanted to relay his Government's interest in the Institute's activities relating to the development programmes and the status of women in his country. In addition, he announced that he would formally present to INSTRAW an invitation to expand its presence and influence in some of his Government's programmes. He also mentioned the activities of the Instituto Ecuatoriano de Investigación y Capacitación de la Mujer (IECAIM) and the catalytic role of local non-governmental organizations in the scope of the civil society. He mentioned that the Institute's focal point in Ecuador was organizing a national seminar on women and the use of natural resources, to be held in the autumn of 1996, and would welcome the Institute's substantive and financial contribution when funds were available.

68. The Board reiterated the recommendation adopted at its fifteenth session on the establishment of the Institute's web site to promote the Institute's activities and at the same time be a mechanism to obtain research material and publications from a large number of institutions. The Board also referred to the possibility of submitting a specific project proposal to the European Union for funding.

69. The Acting Administrative Officer stated that in relation to the Board's recommendation at its fifteenth session regarding the purchase of the equipment necessary to install e-mail and the internet at INSTRAW, the installation and the training of INSTRAW staff would be completed by the end of March 1996.

70. After those general considerations, the Acting Director drew the attention of the Board to part I of document INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3, containing substantive considerations and general principles; financial considerations; resource and budget assumptions and elements for a fund-raising strategy, which encompassed the framework of the Institute's programme budget.

71. She then submitted part II of the above-mentioned document, for the consideration of the Board, regarding the Institute's policy-making organ, the Board of Trustees, and its interaction with INSTRAW and with the Institute's management. The analysis of the role of the Strategic Planning Committee was summarized in document INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.4/Add.1.

72. Regarding the disposition of General Assembly resolution 50/163 on the Institute's reporting to both the Second and the Third Committees of the General Assembly, she requested a more active interaction between the members of the Board and their respective Governments. Board members could brief their Governments and, whenever possible, their respective permanent missions in New York and Geneva on INSTRAW's activities. That approach would facilitate a better understanding of the Institute's work and enhance any action on fund-raising activities.

73. Several arguments and considerations were formulated. The Board agreed that it could offer advice to the Director of INSTRAW on fund-raising modalities. However, it could not engage itself in any specific activity. The Board agreed that in order to have a comprehensive fund-raising strategy, a clear set of guidelines must be prepared by the Director. The Board approved the proposal of engaging a consultant/specialist to prepare the strategy.

74. The Board pointed out that the Director's main responsibility was fund-raising, not handling the Institute's day-to-day activities. It was thus recommended that the position of Deputy Director be re-established. That official would undertake the substantive and managerial tasks of the Institute, under the guidance of the Director.

75. The Board recommended that additional measures be considered, such as selling advisory services, research data and publications, and developing income-generating activities, as stipulated in article VI.6 of the Institute's Statute.

76. The Board considered the matter of the possible representation on the Board of countries in transition and concluded that it was not an appropriate time for such a decision. Certain mechanisms could be envisaged to broaden the Institute's scope of influence, such as promoting focal points networking in the area.

77. The Acting Director, following the reflections of the policy-making organ, pointed out that, in order to secure the continuity and comparative advantage of its work programme, the Institute should establish a more dynamic interaction with the regional commissions. To promote the Institute's activities and presence, a possible option could be the opening of liaison offices in the different regions.

78. The Board noted the increase in the budget allocation provided to the unit in charge of the executive direction and management programme of activities. The Acting Director explained that the increase was due to the upgrading of one post and the redeployment of other posts to the unit, which were assigned to the sub-unit on documentation, placed under the direct supervision of the Director.

79. The staff configuration approved for the previous biennium reflected a distribution of functions no longer applicable to the current needs of the Institute. The principle behind the redeployment of posts from one unit to another in the organizational chart was to reflect correctly the functions pertaining and specific to the different units in order to enable the Institute to carry out its work programme.

80. A Board member stated that the Institute has to strive to implement long-term solutions to staffing, going beyond the interim problems and short-term solutions.

81. The Acting Director expressed appreciation for the performance of the Liaison Office in New York. In reply to the Board's inquiries in reference to the rental expenses in New York, the Acting Director explained that rental space was not cheaper in New York. She mentioned the precariousness of the office's conditions, particularly its limited space.

82. She brought to the attention of the Board the fact that the Liaison Office, under its current composition, was not able to participate in all of the meetings and activities - much less the inter-agency meetings - convened at the level of Director or head-of-organization. Some of the meetings were very important, particularly when decisions were being made regarding the interaction of the agencies and the complementarity of programmes and coordination mechanisms. The Professional staff assigned to the Liaison Office could attend only some of the meetings.

83. In response, the Board endorsed the strengthening of the Liaison Office, by upgrading a Professional post from P-3 to P-4 and re-deploying a P-2 post from Santo Domingo to New York.

84. Regarding the lack of space at the Liaison Office, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women offered the use of the conference room of the Division, whenever required, if available.

85. The representative of the regional commissions stated that the regional commissions' Liaison Office in New York had a well-equipped office and a very good reference library which INSTRAW was welcome to use. She would contact the liaison staff in order to brief them on the matter.

86. The Acting Director mentioned some of the concerns expressed by member States regarding the INSTRAW staffing table and the imbalance between the number of Professionals and General Service posts. She recalled the lengthy discussions already held by the Board at its fifteenth session and the recommendations adopted. In compliance with those recommendations, the draft budget programme presented to the United Nations Controller, in December 1995, contained a proposal concerning the national officer category which unfortunately was not approved. Several observations were made on the matter. On the question of upgrading General Service posts to the Professional level, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women explained that, while the situation may have already caused a certain level of uncertainty and anxiety to the INSTRAW staff, it was not the result of an arbitrary decision, because the United Nations Secretariat had followed a well-established standard rule of classification which affected the staffing arrangements of the entire system.

87. In the presentation of the Institute's proposed activities in research and training and in information, communication and documentation for the biennium 1996-1997, the Institute's Coordinator for Research and Training explained that the rationale behind the research and training proposal was based on recommendations made by the Board of Trustees at its fifteenth session and by

the Strategic Planning Committee at its informal meeting in Beijing. It also incorporated recommendations from recently held United Nations international conferences, in particular, those of the Beijing Platform for Action.

88. She gave a concise description of the objectives and methodologies in each of the programme elements contained in the proposed work programme.

89. She presented other activities related to research and training, including the preparations for an international research and training conference on gender issues which was approved by the Board at its fifteenth session, to be hosted by ILO/ITC in 1997. The representative of the ILO outlined the focus of the conference and stated that fund-raising would be undertaken jointly. The Institute's participation in the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II (Istanbul, June 1996) was welcomed by the Board. The Coordinator asked the Board to consider financial and practical aspects of those activities in the proposed programme budget.

90. She also mentioned that INSTRAW, in its proposed substantive work programme, increasingly included the concept of human rights. She emphasized that the rights in question would be contained in international governance, protocols, and conventions that were legally binding on those States that ratified or acceded to them. By calling attention to human rights, INSTRAW sought to contribute to both the debate on the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights and the development of mechanisms for incorporating a gender perspective into the human rights work of the United Nations. The issue was addressed under agenda item 8.

91. In reference to the information, communication and documentation unit, she mentioned that although the unit appears as a separate entity, the scope of its activities was defined within the framework of executive direction and the research and training unit.

92. One of the important activities that INSTRAW proposed for the coming biennium was to formulate a public relations strategy to increase its visibility and the outreach of its research and training work. That also included improving and diversifying the in-house production of INSTRAW publications and translating them into French and Spanish.

93. The Board expressed concern that African countries were somehow neglected in the scope of the research and training activities of INSTRAW. The Board reiterated the importance of integrating the concept of gender - that is, focusing on both women and men - into the methodologies designed for the proposed research and training activities.

94. The Acting Director noted that a gender perspective was implicit in all INSTRAW programmes but that INSTRAW focused on women because they were its main object of concern.

95. In response to the Board's request for comments on the Institute's proposed training activities and at the request of the Acting Director, staff members provided information on the training components of specific programmes.

96. In considering the proposed activities in research and training and in information, communication and documentation, the Board deliberated on each topic, following the chronological presentation in document INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3.

97. In the programme on research and training, under subprogramme one, Economic and political empowerment of women, the Board discussed and approved the two programme elements. The first, on the impact of economic integration on women's development prospects in Latin America and the Caribbean, was discussed in conjunction with agenda item 8. The Board decided that the programme element should be reformulated, taking into account the relevant work and studies that were already available. It also decided that the proposal should be rejected in the proposed programme budget, along with the other proposed projects subject to outside funding. In addition, the Board encouraged INSTRAW to hold consultations with the agencies/organizations that were doing some work on the topic.

98. Regarding the proposal to prepare a human rights handbook (included in annex II of INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3), the Board decided to defer its consideration.

99. On the second programme element discussed under subprogramme one, on women in decision-making and leadership, the Board raised questions on the contents of the proposed activities and the research methodology to be applied. The Board was of the opinion that INSTRAW must be at the forefront in terms of developing innovative methodologies and on improving women's access to power. The traditional approach of focusing only on women must be changed, in view of the fact that the barriers and problems restraining women's participation in decision-making and leadership involved power relations between the sexes. The Board stressed the importance of comparing the access of women and of men to power, which should be considered when designing the research methodology. The Board approved the budget allocations for the programme element.

100. Several proposals were formulated regarding the inclusion of the girl-child in parts of the Institute's work programme, in accordance with paragraph 334 of the Platform for Action.

101. All programme elements contained in subprogramme two, Women, environment and sustainable development, were approved by the Board. In addition, the Board decided that the training package, Women, Environmental Management and Sustainable Development, should be translated into Spanish and French and that funds should be allocated for that purpose.

102. The Board mentioned that in-kind contributions of translation and printing services could be one way of attending to the matter and at the same time, could facilitate fund-raising. The Acting Director, after a detailed explanation, requested the approval of the Board to hire a trilingual secretary to attend to the Institute's day-to-day translation needs of documents and correspondence and for a part-time in-house translator. The Board gave its approval.

103. All programme elements contained in subprogramme three, Women, media and communications, were approved by the Board.

104. All programme elements in subprogramme four, Statistics and indicators on gender issues, and subprogramme five, Other activities related to research and training, were approved by the Board.

105. In relation to the proposed activities in the programme on information, communication and documentation, the Board sought clarification on certain matters. The Acting Director provided general comments, complemented by the staff member assigned to the unit.

106. Regarding proposed activities in the programme on administrative and programme support, the Board requested clarification on an item that appeared in tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the proposed programme budget (INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3 - namely, "temporary posts". The Acting Administrative Officer explained that INSTRAW had no permanent posts, since, according to its Statute, all posts were designed to be covered by the approved biennial budget and were, therefore, of a temporary nature.

107. The Board requested explanations about the "rental/maintenance of premises in Santo Domingo", in view of the fact that to their understanding, the building and the premises were donated by the Government of the Dominican Republic. The Acting Director answered that, in fact, the building and the premises were donated to INSTRAW at the moment of signing the Host Country Agreement. The rental expenditures were not related to INSTRAW's headquarters but corresponded to rental expenses of the Liaison Office in New York. Consequently the item should read: "rental of equipment and maintenance of premises". Similar amendments would be reflected in the applicable places, as explained in paragraph 97 of the proposed programme budget.

108. All programme elements of subprogrammes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the unit were approved by the Board.

109. The Board also reviewed the proposed programme activities that were subject to outside funding. All the proposals were approved by the Board and the following observations were made:

(a) With reference to subprogramme 1 of the programme on research and training, Economic and political empowerment, regarding a yearbook on women's human rights, the Board suggested the proposal be reformulated in line with the general comments made by the Board during the discussion on the empowerment of women;

(b) Regarding the selection of an African country for the proposed study on time-use survey methodology, the Board stated it would discuss the project and submit concrete suggestions.

110. After approving the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, the President of the Board highlighted the Board's concerns with the staffing situation of the Institute. She pointed out that at its fifteenth session the Board had recommended that vacant posts be filled as quickly as possible. Asked to comment on the matter, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women explained that the vacancies fell under the Acting Director's delegation of authority given to her by the Secretary-General, as stipulated in INSTRAW's

Statute and in accordance with the United Nations corresponding rules and regulations.

111. Concerning the staffing configuration and other matters, the Board inquired about the proposal to abolish five General Service posts. The Acting Director explained that the diminishing voluntary contributions, the comments made by donors at the Pledging Conferences, and the restructuring requests formulated in several General Assembly resolutions constituted the elements of the analysis. Furthermore, the Acting Director explained that the evaluation conducted on INSTRAW in February 1991, commissioned by the foreign ministries of Norway, the Netherlands and Finland, highlighted the imbalance of the Institute's staffing table, where the majority of posts were in the General Service category. She recalled several considerations contained in her mission report on the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities for the year 1996, distributed to Board members for their information.

112. The Acting Director pointed out that an exercise on redeployment and redefinition of post functions had been undertaken before the number of posts that could be abolished without hampering the Institute's delivery capacity was determined. It was concluded that several complementary functions could be carried out by one, instead of two, persons. Before submitting the proposal, the Acting Director had carefully considered its effect, in order to make an objective decision within the parameters of efficiency required by the Board and the donors.

113. The Acting Director requested the Board to agree to a proposal incorporating a compensatory mechanism for the affected staff members. If such a proposal were accepted by the Board, a request to the United Nations Secretariat would be formulated under the same parameters as the consultation presented in November 1995 - that is, one month compensatory salary for staff working at INSTRAW less than three years and three months compensatory salary to those engaged with INSTRAW for more than three years.

114. The Board then approved the abolishment of the five posts and strongly recommended that the staff members be compensated according to the Acting Director's proposal.

115. The Acting Director informed the Board on several INSTRAW staff, classified in the General Service category who had been performing functions requiring a higher level of responsibility than those inherent in their posts. She recalled that the Board recommended at its fifteenth session that the Institute seek the advice of the Office of Human Resources and Management in order to apply the national officer category to three posts at INSTRAW. She further observed that the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts did not agree with the proposal.

116. The Acting Administrative Officer explained that, in accordance with INSTRAW's statute, its staff were recruited under fixed-term appointments and were limited to service with the Institute. Therefore, INSTRAW staff were considered external candidates and, as such, were not eligible to take the G-to-P examinations to convert from the General Service to the Professional category.

117. The representative of the Under-Secretary-General for the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development stated that the United Nations system provided for a mechanism through which General Service staff could opt for conversion to the Professional category through competitive examination (G-to-P exams). She noted that new guidelines were set forth in the Secretary-General's Bulletin No. 282 of 5 January 1996, on special measures which enable women at the Secretariat holding General Service posts to convert to the Professional category. The Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women asked to be provided with adequate information on the Institute's case and offered to present the issue to the corresponding office in the Office of Human Resources Management for its consideration, provided the Board agreed. In reference to the National Officer category, she explained that in the United Nations system it applied only at the United Nations Information Centres, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies of the system, such as UNICEF.

118. The process and procedures related to advertising vacancy announcements and recruitment were discussed in detail.

119. The Board asked to take part in the process of defining adequate profiles for the different vacancies, particularly in light of the Institute's need for research and training expertise. The Board agreed to assist the Acting Director in that task.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

A. Overall programme of action for INSTRAW

120. The Board expressed its satisfaction with the work undertaken by the Institute in the implementation of its work programme of the 1994-1995 biennium. The Board welcomed the results of INSTRAW's participation at the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The Board commended INSTRAW's active participation in the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women and in the Conference itself. Moreover, the Board commended the Acting Director and the staff at large for their dedication and accomplishments, despite the difficulties faced during the past years.

121. The Board took note with satisfaction of General Assembly resolution 50/163, regarding the Institute's substantive programme of work, and took note of the content of resolution 50/162. Furthermore, the Board also took note of resolution 50/203, on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

122. The Board noted with appreciation that, in compliance with resolution 50/163, INSTRAW would start reporting to the Second Committee of the General Assembly on agenda items relating to the Institute's research and training activities.

123. The Board took note of the report and recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee at its third meeting, held on 17 February 1996.

124. The Board welcomed the designation of Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, as the Secretary-General's Special Representative to INSTRAW.

125. The Board welcomed the designation of Rosario Green as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues, and requested INSTRAW to establish close collaboration with her office.

126. The Board also congratulated Angela King on her appointment as Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women.

127. The Board expressed its appreciation to Ji Chaozhu, Under-Secretary-General, Department for Development Support and Management Services, Guido Bertucci and the Executive Officer for their continuous support provided to the Institute.

128. The Board welcomed INSTRAW's participation in the preparatory activities for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, to be held in Istanbul, in June 1996, and recommended that considerations on the different stages of a woman's life cycle be raised at the Conference, particularly those relating to the elderly.

129. The Board stated that the Institute's programme of work should continue to focus on and establish priorities in areas where INSTRAW has already acquired expertise - areas such as the political and economic empowerment of women; statistics and indicators in gender issues; natural resources and sustainable development; water and waste management; renewable sources of energy; access to credit; women and the media; and, issues relating to different population groups, especially the elderly and displaced, refugees and migrant women. It was also suggested that the girl-child should be included as a priority area.

130. The Board requested that INSTRAW update its communication technologies in order to benefit from the internet and e-mail. To that end, it was suggested that INSTRAW should make efforts to create and participate in the worldwide-web (WWW).

131. The Board stressed the importance of strengthening communications and networking mechanisms between INSTRAW and its focal points and suggested that seed money allocated for the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 be increased to expand the promotion of joint activities.

132. The Board reiterated the need for INSTRAW to find effective ways of distributing its publications in order to make the Institute more visible.

133. The Board recommended strengthening the collaboration between INSTRAW, the regional commissions and the Division for the Advancement of Women, particularly in matters related to the implementation of the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action at the regional level. The Board accepted, with appreciation, the regional commissions' offer to cooperate in executing joint regional programmes with INSTRAW.

134. The Board recommended that, in compliance with its research and training mandate, INSTRAW should undertake steps to address the 12 critical areas of concern on the Beijing Platform for Action relevant to its research and training programme. The Board also acknowledged INSTRAW contribution into the system-wide medium-term plan, 1996-2001, and to the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Task Force on Women.

135. The Board expressed its satisfaction with the close cooperation between INSTRAW and the International Training Centre of the ILO and with the joint training seminars envisaged for 1996. The Board took note of the decision of the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations staff college at the ILO-Turin Centre and concurred with the recommendation of the Director of the Centre to apply INSTRAW's research and training expertise on gender issues in the preparation of the college's training materials.

B. Operational and budgetary issues

136. The Board unanimously and strongly recommended that the Acting Director be appointed Director at the D-2 level, in the most expeditious manner, for the duration of the period covered by the approved programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

137. The Board also approved and strongly recommended that the contracts of the Institute's staff, based on their merits, be extended until the end of the biennium 1996-1997.

138. The Board recommended that the functions of the Deputy Director be reinstated at the D-1 level. The new functions will include regular substantive, managerial and supervisory tasks, as required for the overall operations of the Institute, and the implementation of the programme of activities. The reinstatement of the original post did not have financial implications for the overall budget approved by the Board for the 1996-1997 biennium.

139. The Board approved the new staffing configuration of the Administration Unit, which introduced the reclassification of the post of Chief Administrative Officer from the P-5 to the P-3 level. The Board also reiterated its serious concern with the fact that the issue of the former Chief Administrative Officer had not yet been resolved.

140. The Board recommended that INSTRAW undertake the necessary consultations with the corresponding authorities in the United Nations system to provide separation indemnity, as appropriate, to those staff members who would be leaving the Institute as a result of the abolition of five General Service posts.

141. The Board decided that the implementation of programme element 1.1, Impact of economic integration of women's development prospects in Latin America and the Caribbean, be subjected to availability of external funding and decided to defer the funds originally allocated to the programme towards, inter alia:

(a) Translation of the training package on women, environmental management and sustainable development into French and Spanish;

(b) Adequate allocation to contract the services of French and Spanish translators, as required, for INSTRAW general correspondence, material and documents;

(c) Adequate allocation to provide material and equipment to the documentation sub-unit: a transparency projector, ambulatory displayer, microfiche etc.;

(d) Adequate allocation for the acquisition of bibliographical research material;

(e) Provisions to implement output 1 under project analysis of the policy implications of measuring and valuing unpaid work, as reflected in paragraph 7 of annex II, INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3;

(f) Adequate allocations to enable INSTRAW's participation and access to communications technologies;

(g) A modest increase in the original allocation under consultancy services of the Executive Direction and Management so as to secure the best possible expertise for the engagement and related costs of a specialist in fund-raising.

142. The Board recommended the strengthening of the INSTRAW Liaison Office in New York with the redeployment of the P-2 Programme Officer from the Unit of Information, Communication and Documentation.

143. The Board made a thorough evaluation of the financial status of the Institute's reserves. In view of the low level of contributions registered during the past biennium, the Board emphasized the Institute's urgent need to make an active and strong fund-raising effort, to ensure an adequate flow of contributions to its Trust Fund. To that end, the Board authorized the Acting Director to engage the services of a highly qualified consultant to define and design fund-raising strategies to be carried out by the Institute's Director.

144. The Board took note with appreciation of the report on the financial and budgetary status of the Institute and approved the proposed programme budget contained in INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.3, Corr.1 and 2, as amended during the session.

VIII. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

145. The sixteenth session of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was held at the Institute's headquarters in Santo Domingo from 19 to 23 February 1996. The Board held seven meetings.

146. The session was opened by the President of the Board, Professor Els Postel-Coster. She welcomed all the Board members, specially the new member, Esther M. Ashton, the ex officio members, the distinguished observers representing member States and representatives of the agencies within and outside the United Nations system. She expressed the Board's condolences to the families of the victims of the tragic airplane accident that had taken place near Puerto Plata on 6 February 1996.

147. The President informed the Board that the Secretary-General had designated as his Special Representative Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. Mr. Desai was not able to attend, for financial reasons, but he had designated Angela King, Director of the Division for the Advancement Women, as his representative. On behalf of the Board, she also expressed INSTRAW's thanks to Ji Chaozhu, Under-Secretary-General, Department for Development Support and Management Services, and representative of the Secretary-General to the Board in past sessions, for his active support of INSTRAW, and to Guido Bertucci and Hanifa Mezoui. The President pointed out that Rosario Green, Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General and his Adviser on Gender Issues, had been invited to the sixteenth session of the Board but had not been able to attend.

148. The President explained that during the course of 1995, the Institute had taken part in three major United Nations events; had published an impressive number of books, pamphlets, flyers and posters and two issues of INSTRAW News; had organized a number of special events, panels and press conferences; and had established new contacts. She pointed out that all of the activities have been achieved in spite of vacancies in practically all high-level posts.

149. The President of the Board said that INSTRAW's visibility had improved. She pointed out that the financial situation had remained sound and that new donors had recently shown interest in the work of the Institute. She expressed her gratitude to the staff and to the Acting Director for all the tasks she had undertaken and completed since her appointment.

150. The representative of the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Ms. King, then addressed the Board and pointed out that the United Nations continued to favour a strong and productive INSTRAW, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/163 of 22 December 1995, and that the Department was ready to assist the Institute in responding to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. 2/ She explained that the Fourth World Conference on Women had been very ambitious as regards programmes designated to mainstream gender perspectives throughout the United Nations, its system of organizations, Governments and civil society.

151. She highlighted the roles of the Division for the Advancement of Women (paras. 327-328 of the Platform for Action), of INSTRAW (para. 334) and of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (para. 335), which were to ensure that the mainstreaming of gender issues took place by policy analysis, research, training, advocacy and operational activities for the implementation of the Platform for Action.

152. She also commended the Acting Director and the Institute's staff for their work.

153. The representative of the host country, Gloria Milán Lugo, Under-Secretary of State for Economic Affairs of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, and representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the members of the Board of Trustees and all other international representatives to the Dominican Republic.

154. She highlighted INSTRAW's important role as the sole institute within the United Nations system to work on research and training to promote the advancement of women through analysis of the obstacles that prevented women's participation in the development process. She pointed out that at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, among others, it had been recognized that sustainable development could not be achieved without the full participation of women. The Dominican Republic was fully convinced of INSTRAW's important contribution to a more just society for women and men, where discrimination, violence and inequality would not exist. She expressed the pride felt by the Dominican Republic in having provided INSTRAW's headquarters in Santo Domingo since 1983 and reiterated its permanent commitment to support INSTRAW's work.

155. In her capacity as ex officio member, Jacqueline Malagón, welcomed the Board and expressed her regrets for not being able personally to greet the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. She requested that her greetings be conveyed to him.

156. She expressed her gratitude to the President and members of the Board for their efforts in reinforcing and revitalizing INSTRAW during the past three years. She also expressed her appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands for its active support to the Institute's work programme. She commended the work of the Acting Director, stating that it was not an exaggeration to say that her dynamism and leadership during external and internal hardship and constraints had saved INSTRAW. Furthermore, she expressed her gratitude to Julia Tavares de Alvarez.

157. She pointed to General Assembly resolution 50/163, in which the Assembly empowered INSTRAW to report to the Second Committee in addition to the Third Committee. She stated that, in order to comply with that new important responsibility, the Institute must rely on adequate financial and human resources. On behalf of her Government, she requested further information on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Trustees at its fifteenth session 1/ regarding staffing arrangements.

158. Ms. Malagón recommended that INSTRAW bring to the attention of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, the situation of elderly women, in particular, migrants, refugees and those living in rural areas. She also proposed that analyses be made of the impact of natural disasters, drought and desertification on the living conditions of ageing women around the world.

159. She concluded by emphasizing the role of INSTRAW and women in combating poverty and expressed her Government's continued commitment to collaboration in that respect and to providing its full support to INSTRAW. Finally, she requested that her statement be annexed in its entirety in the final report of the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW at its sixteenth session.

160. In her opening statement, the Acting Director, on behalf of INSTRAW and its staff, welcomed the members of the Board of Trustees and congratulated Ms. King on her new appointment as Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women. She expressed appreciation to Ji Chaozhu and to Guido Bertucci and to Hanifa Mezoui for their contributions to the Institute. She also expressed her gratitude to the President of the Board for her invaluable support and sound advice.

161. She brought to the attention of the Board the contents of General Assembly resolution 31/135 of 16 December 1976, by which the Assembly had endorsed the establishment of INSTRAW, thus ratifying Economic and Social Council resolution 1998 (LX) of 12 May 1976, in which the Council had decided to establish INSTRAW as an autonomous body under the auspices of the United Nations and envisaged the substantial contribution that INSTRAW would make to the advancement of women. She emphasized that the past 20 years of hard work had been fruitful.

162. She highlighted the important contribution made by United Nations conferences since 1992 in sobering analyses of the state of natural resources and the environment; poverty eradication; population growth; economic, social and cultural rights; and the precarious condition of women's lives. The research institutes should focus on providing feasible solutions that would allow all social groups to have dignity, equity and peace, according to the theme of the Beijing Conference.

163. She pointed out that research related to women was a long and silent process, both at the level of perception and at the public-opinion, institutional and political levels. She outlined specific problems caused by environmental deterioration and how it affected women's lives and explained INSTRAW's programme in that area. She gave a brief analysis of other issues related to INSTRAW's work programme in the areas of political and economic empowerment, communications technology, statistics and gender indicators. She pointed out that INSTRAW's experience in those areas of work was a comparative advantage in complying with the mandate for which the Institute had been created.

B. Attendance

164. The following members of the Board attended the session: Selma Acuner (Turkey), Ishan Abdalla Algabshawi (Sudan), Esther Ashton (Bolivia), Fatima Benslimane Hassar (Morocco), Pilar Escario Rodríguez-Spiteri (Spain), Noelie Kangoye (Burkina Faso), Els Postel-Coster (Netherlands), Gail Saunders (Bahamas), Renata Siemienska-Zochowska (Poland) and Sudarsono (Indonesia).

165. The following ex officio members of the Board also attended: the representative of the Under-Secretary-General, the Department for Policy

Coordination and Sustainable Development, also representing the Division for the Advancement of Women; the representative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) representing all the regional commissions; the representative of the host country (Dominican Republic) and the Acting Director of INSTRAW.

166. Also attending the session were the representatives of Ecuador, Italy, Malta, Mexico and Turkey, and the representatives of the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, the Inter-American Development Bank and the focal point from the Dominican Republic.

C. Election of officers

167. At its 1st meeting, in accordance with rule 7 of its rules of procedure, the Board elected the following officers by acclamation:

President: Gail Saunders (Bahamas)

Vice-President: Selma Acuner (Turkey)

Rapporteur: Sudarsono (Indonesia)

168. The newly elected President thanked the members of the Board for her election and expressed her commitment to fulfilling their expectations in guiding the discussions of the Board at its sixteenth session. She continued by highlighting the special and unique role that the Institute played in the United Nations system and noted that both the Beijing Platform for Action and the General Assembly, at its fiftieth session, had recognized the distinct mandates of INSTRAW and UNIFEM in the advancement of women. She pointed out that, in order to comply with its mandate, INSTRAW needed to strengthen its structure, especially with regard to staffing.

D. Agenda

169. At its 1st meeting, the Board adopted the following agenda (INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.1) by consensus:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Election of officers.
4. Strategic Planning Committee meeting.
5. Progress report by the Acting Director.
6. Networking - focal points.

7. Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997.

8. Empowerment of women.

9. Other matters relating to the functioning of the Institute.

10. Date of the next session of the Board.

11. Adoption of the report of the session.

12. Closing of the session.

170. In regard to the organization of work, the President made various proposals relating to the distribution of documents and stated that interventions by Board members and other participants should be as concise as possible.

E. Date of the next session of the Board

171. At its 7th meeting, on 23 February 1996, the Board agreed that its seventeenth session should take place during the second half of February 1997, in accordance with United Nations calendar requirements. 4/

F. Adoption of the report of the Board on its sixteenth session

172. At its 7th meeting, on 23 February 1996, the Board adopted the report on its sixteenth session (INSTRAW/BT/1996/R.4 and Add.1-6).

Notes

1/ E/1995/80.

2/ See Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20), chap. I, resolution 1.

3/ Ibid., annex II.

4/ See General Assembly resolution 50/206 of 23 December 1995.

ANNEX

STATEMENT OF JACQUELINE MALAGÓN TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF INSTRAW AT ITS SIXTEENTH SESSION

Santo Domingo, 19 February 1996

At the inauguration of this sixteenth session of INSTRAW's Board of Trustees, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Dominican Republic, I wished to welcome the representative of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Mr. Nitin Desai, but I have just learned that, due to the financial crisis which currently affects the United Nations, Mr. Desai is unable to attend. I welcome therefore Mrs. Angela King, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who attends this meeting in representation of Mr. Desai. We ask that the President of the Board, through Mrs. King, extend our warm regards to Mr. Desai as well as the concern of the Government of the Dominican Republic, which trusts that his absence will not be detrimental to the existence or autonomy of INSTRAW, or a deviation from its mandate.

We also wish to welcome the members of the Board of Trustees and the observers who will participate with us in this sixteenth session of the Board.

In addition, we wish to refer to the recommendation formulated at the Fourth World Conference on Women that a high officer of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General provide him with advice regarding issues relating to gender and help to guarantee that the Beijing Platform For Action is applied throughout the United Nations system. The Secretary-General has designated such a high adviser, Under-Secretary-General Rosario Green, to fulfil that mission. Ms. Green will assist the Secretary-General in guaranteeing that gender issues are efficiently integrated into the policies and programmes of all spheres of work in the system and are taken fully into account when promoting the linkages of the organization with civil society. Those monitoring and coordinating functions will be an integral part of the political responsibilities and other types of responsibility which concern Ms. Green in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

It would have been commendable had Ms. Green been present on this occasion. The Dominican Republic, as host country, wishes to recommend to the Board of Trustees and to INSTRAW's Director that means of collaboration with her be established.

We want to express our gratitude to the President of the Board for the efforts made to strengthen and revitalize INSTRAW during the difficult past three years. We are very grateful to her country, the Netherlands, for the active and continued support provided to INSTRAW's programme of work.

We are also grateful to the Vice-President and the Rapporteur who have contributed so much to the work of the Institute.

Finally, we must recognize the work of Ms. Martha Dueñas-Loza, the Acting Director of INSTRAW. As the President of the Board stated eloquently during the last session of the Board, if INSTRAW, despite having gone through a period of tremendous difficulty continued to exist and to work, showing a list of remarkable initiatives and activities, that was undoubtedly due to the extraordinary dynamism and dedication of the Acting Director, Ms. Martha Dueñas-Loza. It is not an exaggeration to say that she has saved the life of the Institute with her leadership during this trial period.

The participation of the Acting Director was also essential in ensuring the financial reserve of 1 million dollars needed by INSTRAW's trust fund. Despite the restrictions imposed due to external circumstances and to the large number of vacancies at a high level, INSTRAW has been able to carry out the programme of work approved by the Board.

Please allow me now to thank Ambassador Julia Tavares de Alvarez, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations and a member of the Commission established by His Excellency, President Dr. Joaquín Balaguer, to handle matters related to INSTRAW. Her untiring work and devotion have been decisive in defending and preserving the integrity of the Statutes of INSTRAW.

This sixteenth session of the Board is crucial because we meet at a time when the United Nations confronts a profound financial crisis and is in the midst of a reform and restructuring process which, no doubt, will affect the functioning and efficiency of all its bodies and organizations, including those working for the advancement of women. Also, the United Nations system must find adequate means to implement the recommendations which arose from the five important conferences held by the United Nations since 1992, particularly those concerning the eradication of poverty and the deterioration of the environment, which have worsened the standard of living of women throughout the world, particularly those from developing countries. To eliminate this trend, it is necessary to implement strong and immediate measures.

One of the measures that we would like to recommend to the Board is that it bring to the attention of the Habitat II Conference INSTRAW's pioneer work regarding the situation and condition of elderly women, particularly rural, migrant and refugee women. This proposal should include an analysis of the effects of natural disasters, drought and desertification on elderly women throughout the world.

During the fifteenth period of sessions of the Board, the Acting Director pointed out that INSTRAW's report was reviewed by the Third Committee only of the General Assembly, with relation to the item "Advancement of women". The Acting Director noted that this limited the Institute's ability to provide the other main committees of the General Assembly with substantive contributions and conclusions derived from its research in crucial areas of economic and social development, such as water, environment and sustainable development, waste management, renewable sources of energy, human settlements, alleviation of poverty, desertification, international migration, and violence against women migrant workers. The Acting Director pointed out that, in order to overcome such limitations, INSTRAW should present reports to the Second and Third

Committees regarding the subjects pertinent to its programmes in order to improve the conditions and synergy among them. The President suggested that the Board should consider the possibility of formulating a recommendation in that respect; it was later approved by the General Assembly in resolution 50/162 of 23 December 1995. That, in our opinion, was a significant contribution that will undoubtedly promote the advancement of women. However, it must be pointed out that this new responsibility demands adequate human and financial resources.

INSTRAW's dynamic and substantive participation contributed to the success of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the NGO Forum. We await with interest the brochure that the Institute is preparing, compiling the objectives and main results as well as the conclusions and most important recommendations resulting from the special events and working groups organized by INSTRAW at the conference and the Forum.

We have studied the progress report prepared by the Acting Director for the work performed in relation to the 1995 programme of work. The volume and quality of the work the Institute has been able to perform is noteworthy, taking into consideration the reduced number of professional staff available, the numerous vacancies at the management level, and the limited financial resources at its disposal. We wish to praise once again the Acting Director and the Institute's personnel for the competence and dedication shown in the implementation of the programme approved by the Board at its fourteenth session.

However, it is important to emphasize that the lack of an adequate management team is an untenable situation, since it is detrimental for the implementation and development of the Institute's mandate.

Consequently, our Government is particularly interested in knowing what measures have been taken to implement the following recommendations made by the Board:

(a) A Director should be appointed as soon as possible, to comply with the mandate under resolution 49/163 of the General Assembly (23 December 1994);

(b) As soon as possible the recruitment process for a Chief of the Research and Training Unit, a Chief of the Information, Communications and Documentation Unit, and a Chief of Administration and Finance should be concluded;

(c) The Office of Human Resources Management of the United Nations Secretariat should be asked to apply the national officers category to three posts occupied by qualified staff of the Institute;

(d) The categories and salaries of all General Service staff should be examined and upgraded, as needed.

We will make concrete observations regarding these and other pertinent measures once the Board has examined the corresponding issues of the programme. We await with interest the study of the budget project for the biennium 1996-1997 which contains the configuration of INSTRAW's staff.

As was stated in the report of the Secretary-General regarding INSTRAW's activities (A/50/538), the activities of the Institute are of crucial importance if the United Nations is to comply with its mission to alleviate poverty. Both the Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women pointed out the important role of INSTRAW, in particular, and of women, in general, in the fight against poverty.

Let me point out, that chapter VI of the Platform, on financial arrangements, underlines that full and efficient implementation of the Platform, including commitments made at prior United Nations summits and conferences, demands the political commitment to provide human and financial resources for the empowerment of women.

To conclude, we wish to assure the United Nations and the Board of Trustees of our continued interest in the advancement of women, our full cooperation to that end, and our strong support of INSTRAW.

On behalf of the Government, the Dominican people and myself, I wish you success in your debate and our best wishes for a pleasant stay in Santo Domingo.